

# The Soundpost

Newsletter of Pacific Northwest Viols—A chapter of the Viola da Gamba Society of America



Cornelis De Heem, *Vanitas Still-Life with Musical Instruments*

## 2020-2021 PNV PLAY DAYS

September 26, 2020 | Ros Morley  
 November 7, 2020 | Caroline Nicolas  
 January 16, 2021 | Arnie Tanimoto  
 March 6, 2021 | Julie Elhard  
**May 8, 2021 | Lisa Terry**

Free for members, \$10 for non-members  
 A = 415

Saturday Play Days will be held virtually  
 via Zoom for the 2020-2021 Season

## The President's Message

by **Bill Warren**

What a great mini-summer we have had the past few days! I hope that you all have been able to take advantage of the opportunity to get outside and go for a walk, a hike, a bike ride, or whatever outdoor activity appeals to you. Thanks to Zoom we have been able to get together for virtual Play Days with some really outstanding teachers during the rainy dreary winter months.

Lisa Terry, former president of the VdGSA, will be our presenter for the May 8 virtual Play Day. The theme of her presentation will be "L'Amorosa Ero, a wonderful collection of eighteen 16th century Italian madrigals for 4 parts, all composed on the same poem (Ero così dicea). The reason for the collection was

kind of a competition by a member of the aristocracy in Brescia who wrote the poem, composed one madrigal himself and challenged other composers to do him better. There are a lot of famous names in the collection (Gastoldi, Marenzio, Luzzaschi, Striggio, Merulo). We will spend a little time understanding the meaning of the text so that experiencing each setting will be all the richer. I like this class a lot because you learn the meaning of the words and their affect and then explore different settings by different composers." She has supplied music and recordings for all viols for your practice ahead of time. I am looking forward to this interesting session with Lisa.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our ability to get together in person. Therefore, our May 8th Play Day will be virtual once again. Access to our virtual Play Days is a continuing benefit of your membership at no additional cost, so be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to play along with a great teacher. We hope to meet in-person at Maple Leaf Lutheran Church for our Play Days in the fall, if and when the church is opened up, everyone is vaccinated, and it is safe for us to be together again. I know we are all looking forward to that day!

We will be using Zoom for the online session as we did for our previous Play Days. Michael King will be providing instructions and technical support for getting online. He will send out a link for access to the Zoom session. We are encouraging everyone to get online at 9:30 a.m., 30 minutes before the start time of 10 a.m., in order to make sure everyone gets connected and also to have some chat time with other members.

There will be a short PNV Annual Meeting immediately following the Play Day. Please plan to stay online for updates about PNViols and to vote for board members—we'll also have an online ballot that Michael will be sending.

Ros Morley was available Friday and Saturday April 16-17 for virtual lessons, as she was in February. Saturday morning she also offered a play-along session of 3-7 part music from Antoine Brumel, Christopher Tye, Robert White, Alfonso Ferrabosco II, and Robert Parsons. This was a really good opportunity to quickly read through some fun music, playing along with the recordings from Ros. Feedback from those who participated was very positive. We would like to hear your thoughts

about the possibility of having a similar play-along session sometime this summer.

A reminder also that recordings of the music for our September, November, January, and March Play Days were previously sent to you so that you can continue to practice that music using the music-minus-one format.

A vibrant and successful viola da gamba chapter depends on membership participation in our Play Days and also willingness to volunteer to be on the PNViols Board. We are fortunate to have eight committed people serving right now. Contact me at [info@pnviols.org](mailto:info@pnviols.org) if you would also be willing to join the board.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you online Saturday May 8 for our next virtual Play Day with Lisa Terry.

**Bill Warren**

*President, Pacific Northwest Viols*

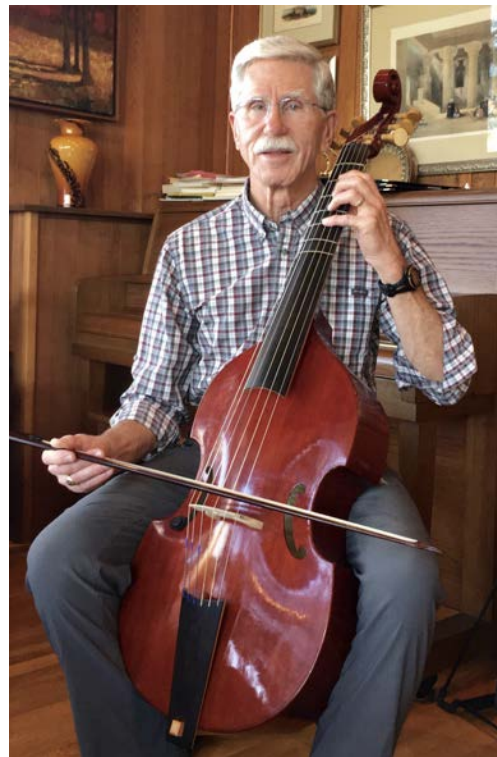




Photo by Donn Mumma, Houston Early Music

## Join Us for our final Play Day of the 2020-2021 Season: Saturday, May 8th with Lisa Terry

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by Michael King

As Bill mentioned in his President’s Message, we are excited to have Lisa Terry as our final Play Day presenter of this season. We’ll be enjoying a program she has created called *L’amorosa ero*. As she explains, an Italian aristocrat composed the poem, *Ero così dicea*, and set it to music—and then held a “competition” asking others to do a better job than he did. This competition attracted a number of big names of the 16th century—Gastoldi, Marenzio, Luzzaschi, Striggio, and Merulo. Our program will explore 6 of these madrigals. You get to decide

what part to play, and you can switch it up as we go.

Prior to the Play Day, we’ll make available scores, parts and recordings provided by Lisa. As of this time, we have recordings of all parts, but not of individual parts. Lisa has also made available the recording played at 80% tempo—great for practice! The scores are marked with expression and bowings; you are welcome to add any of these markings to your parts if you find this interesting. Free bowing and spontaneous expression are also fine!

On the Play Day, Lisa will teach certain aspects of each piece playing live, then she'll play the recording of each piece for everyone to play along with, and will provide coaching following.

LISA TERRY practices, performs and teaches viola da gamba and violoncello in New York City, where she is a member of Parthenia and the Dryden Ensemble (Princeton). Lisa is principal cellist and viol soloist with Tempesta di Mare, Philadelphia's baroque orchestra, and she serves the Viola da Gamba Society of America as Past-President. She was a founding member of ARTEK, and has performed with the New York Philharmonic, New York City Opera, Juilliard Opera Orchestra, Opera Lafayette, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Winter Park Bach Festival, Bethlehem Bach Festival, Concert Royal, New York Collegium, American Classical Orchestra, Four Nations Ensemble, and Chicago Opera Theatre. She earned her degree in cello performance from Memphis State University and continued her studies in New York with Richard Taruskin, viol, and Harry Wimmer, cello. Ms. Terry teaches viol and cello privately in New York and at workshops around the country.

Here is the text of the poem in Italian, along with the English translation:

*Ero così dicea,  
Ch'era il suo Amor nell'acque, ed ella ardea:  
“Onde lucenti, e chiare  
Che le candide membra, e'l vago viso  
Dolce bacciate del mio bel Narciso;  
Ite superbe al Mare,  
Ché sì ricco tesoro, sì care spoglie,  
Il vostro grembo accoglie;  
Ch'andrei superba anch'io,  
Se tenessi qual voi l'Idolo mio.”*

*Hero spoke thus,  
for her Love was in the water and she was on fire:  
“Clear, sparkling waters  
who sweetly kiss the snowy limbs and fair face of  
my beautiful Narcissus,  
go proudly to the Sea  
for you carry in your breast  
such a rich treasure, such precious remains;  
because I would walk proudly too  
if like you I was carrying my Idol.”*

## Write-up of our March 6th Play Day with Julie Elhard

by **Martin Bonham**

Julie Elhard started our session with practical advice on sitting comfortably while playing. Our seat needs to be the correct height for us and level, not tipping back. She asked us to find our balance on our sit bones by leaning forward and back, feeling the difference in the way our muscles support our body and feeling at ease when balanced. The instrument needs to be situated in such a way that we can gain

access to all strings in all parts of our bow with the correct right angle to the string. She reminded us not to lose our sense of balance while holding the instrument and while playing. She always came back to natural movements as our guide, for instance, the bowing motion of the right arm resembles breathing so we should breathe out on long push bows, especially when starting to play.



For our Play Day session, Julie used Dowland's *Lachrimae Antiquae* as the basis for technical as well as musical exploration. The piece involves many levels of meaning and emotion that we can use to gain control over our sound and expand our expressive vocabulary.

She presented us with three pages of simple studies. The first was a descending bass line pattern of 4 pitches, A,G,F,E or C,B,A,G-sharp, depending on which part we practiced in several rhythms that show up in the *Lachrimae*. The first, with a half, then a whole note on each pitch gave us an opportunity to notice and correct basic bowing problems. Because the bow must travel back to its starting place at the beginning of each whole note, the main problem is not to play suddenly louder on half notes when the bow is moving twice as fast as on the whole notes. She suggested various strategies. Firstly, make the motion natural, breathing out gently on the push bows. The pull bow that involves more bow speed needs



to be lighter. Also, it is easier to move the bow quickly when it is further from the bridge and slower close to the bridge. Julie demonstrated more of that later in the session.

She called her metronome her “practice buddy” and used it liberally in the session. She said that a slow metronome beat can represent the tactus and set hers at 50 clicks per minute for the bowing exercises. A whole note was two clicks, a half note, one.

The next bowing exercise involved an even speed of bow: a half note, 2 quarters and a half in each bar. The third required a slight adjustment of speed and pressure: a dotted half, 2 eighths and a half in each bar. In that one, Julie pointed out the different action of the arm and hand on the eighth notes which require a flexible wrist and less arm movement than the larger bow strokes.

She spent extra time with the fourth rhythm: dotted half plus 3 quarters. She said there are 3 ways to play that rhythm. You can play with a lighter faster bow on both of the pulled quarter notes. The goal there is to make the notes all sound equally loud. You can recover all the bow on the first quarter note. That involves making a swell on the dotted half so that the first quarter doesn't suddenly stick out. For this, she demonstrated dropping the forearm during the dotted half in order to bring the bow closer to the bridge. The resulting swell can be very expressive. The quarter note right after almost rebounds from the swell with the arm lifting the bow away from the string for a faster, lighter bow stroke. The third option she gave was to lift the bow after the last quarter in the bar and skate it lightly back to the tip in preparation for the next dotted half. She said that option is best done in quiet passages.



Caravaggio, *The Lute Player*

The second page of bowing studies was all about swells. The first had one bow per bar but two swells on each half note. The second, a dotted half and a quarter in each bar with a swell on the dot. The third was a gradual crescendo in the first bar followed by a diminuendo in the second. I was intrigued because instead of pressing more and moving the bow toward the bridge or moving it faster to produce the swells, the main action Julie uses to initiate a swell is to drop her forearm. It works very well on push bows but I'm not sure I would use that method all the time, especially on pull bows because it changes the angle of the bow, making the bow naturally travel toward the bridge on push bows but away on pull bows. I asked her about that effect and she didn't seem to be aware of it.

After the warm-ups, we moved to detailed examinations of various parts of *Lachrimae*. This was the most interesting part of the class but the most difficult to write about. First, she excerpted 3 sections of the piece with text, all of which have rhetorical repetitions. The first, "Flow my teares, oh Flow my teares," could either swell on each "Flow" or swell on the

first and die away on the second. The next section, "and teares and sighes, and grones and feare, and grieve and paine," needs an intense sound. Anne Duranceau asked if players in Dowland's time would have used devices like a shaking bow for "feare." Julie didn't think so. She thought that sort of thing was more Baroque. Also in the same section, Julie recommended using a back-beat to learn the shifting beat patterns in the repetitions of "my wearie days." In the third excerpt, Julie recommended using a full bow to produce a big 2 bar swell and diminuendo on the whole notes just before "Happie, happie they that in hell" but not swelling on "Happie," rather swelling on "Hell." Julie's treatment of *Lachrimae* was rich with expressive possibilities. She said that the bow strokes must change constantly in the piece. Her class brought to the fore how text can illuminate music and how players, even if just instrumentalists, should reflect and enliven the text. Toward the end of class, we played the *Lachrimae* from parts that had no text, just bowings and some swells. If we hadn't explored the text earlier in the class, we would have had little idea what we were doing.

# Online Play Days? Online Dues via PayPal now an option! (or continue to pay via check and snail mail)

by Michael LaGaly & Michael King



Since coronavirus protocols are going to prevent us from meeting in-person for at least the next few months, the board has decided to go to a virtual Play Day format. For these online Play Days, we have decided that for paid members, attendance will be free-of-charge. Dues are, as last year, \$20.00. For those not wishing to pay membership dues, you are welcome to attend any of our Play Days for a \$10.00 guest fee.

We will be accepting dues via both PayPal and traditional check/membership form. For PayPal, please send the payment to our treasurer, Michael LaGaly, by doing the following:

1. Log into PayPal
2. Click on “Send”
3. Enter mlagaly@gmail.com
4. Enter the amount to be sent, such as \$20.00
5. Add a note for tracking purposes, such as “PNV 2020 Dues” or “PNV Play Day”
6. Click on Continue
7. When asked “What is this payment for,” click on “Sending to a friend”
8. Choose the method you will use to pay—note, there is no fee for using your linked bank account, but there are small fees for using credit cards.

If you would prefer to send your membership dues in via check and the mail, please use the attached membership form and submit to our membership coordinator, Amy Warren, at the address on the form. Looking forward to seeing you online at our next Play Day!

# Do you have a viol collecting dust?

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by **Michael King**

PNV currently has nearly our entire inventory of instruments out for rent! While this is outstanding, it means we may not have instruments for new renters!. If you have a spare viol or two that are collecting some dust, perhaps you could see them becoming a part of our rental instrument fleet – either on an individual case or a sustained basis? Options would include making your instrument available for a period of time for rental (loaning to PNV), permanently (donating instrument to PNV), or on an individual case basis (we've identified a particular need and you have an instrument that might be the right fit—say for an advanced student or someone needing to work on entrance to a conservatory program).

Please reach out to our rental coordinator, Olga Hauptman at [rentals@pnviols.org](mailto:rentals@pnviols.org) and let her know if you can help!



# Always looking for Play Day Presenter Hosts

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by **Michael King**

We are hopeful that we may be able to conduct in-person Play Days in the not-too-distant future. We are still in need of volunteers to help host our Play Day presenters who visit us from out of town! This can be the full-service package including transportation to and from airport, meals, and even providing a space

for lessons, or a lightweight version such as providing a place to sleep and a ride to and from Play Day. Fairly typical is an arrival on a Thursday or Friday, with a Play Day on Saturday and a departure on Sunday or Monday. If you are in a position to be able to assist, please reach out to Michael King at [soundpost@pnviols.org](mailto:soundpost@pnviols.org) to discuss.



# PNV Classifieds

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## **Bass Viol for Sale**

Bass Viol for Sale by Larry Higgins of Higgins & Sons, San Francisco, 1975. Includes cloth gig bag.

Asking \$850.

Please contact:  
Doug Knutson  
(206) 527-1428  
[douknu@msn.com](mailto:douknu@msn.com)



## **Treble Viol for Sale**

Treble Viol by William Ure of Santa Barbara, 2001. 15 1/2" or 39cm scale length. Included: Conrad Gotz bow and a hard case by Kingham.

Asking \$1200.

Please contact:  
Barbara Logen  
360-454-6004  
[pjnbarb789@gmail.com](mailto:pjnbarb789@gmail.com)

Please let us know if you would like to place a classified ad for our membership. Viols and related instruments, bows, cases, etc. are always welcome. Email [soundpost@pnyiols.org](mailto:soundpost@pnyiols.org), and include picture(s), description, price, and contact information for the ad, or a description of what you are looking to buy if you are in the market.

# Pacific Northwest Viols Membership Form

Membership period is for one year, from July 1—June 30.

As a member you will receive the newsletter by e-mail, have library privileges, have a vote at business meetings, be eligible to join the PNV Board, and have the satisfaction of supporting viol playing in the Pacific Northwest.

I am (check one):

- Renewing my membership
- Joining as a new member
- Not interested in membership at this time but would like to subscribe to the Soundpost newsletter.

Please enter your contact information below.  
Renewing members: If your address, phone, and email information are unchanged, please enter only your name.

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Phone:

How did you learn about PNV?

PNV sends an electronic copy of the current membership to all members via e-mail.

Check this box if you do NOT wish PNV to share your information with other members.

PNV occasionally shares information from our mailing list with various concert and workshop sponsoring organizations.

Check this box if you do NOT wish PNV to share your information outside the PNV membership.

I volunteer to help discharge PNV's residency obligation by participating in outreach performances scheduled by the chapter.

I would be interested in hosting a visiting (out-of-town) presenter.

Payments may be submitted either by check (payable to "PNV") to the address listed below, or by cash or check to the PNV Treasurer at the Play Day registration desk. Please indicate your desired payment category below:

\$20 for full annual membership (includes Sound Post subscription, which is delivered by e-mail)

\$10 for full student annual membership (includes Sound Post subscription, which is delivered by e-mail) \$5 for Sound Post subscription only (Canadians may remit in either US or Canadian funds.)

I want to further support PNV, a non-profit 501c3 organization. I would like to make a tax-deductible donation in the amount of \$ .

Please mail all checks (Payable to "PNV") to:  
Amy Warren, 1851 S. Brandon Place, Seattle,  
WA 98108-2376. Thank you!

## Pacific Northwest Viols 2020–2021 Board

Bill Warren, President  
Chu-Lan Chiong, Secretary  
Michael LaGaly, Treasurer  
Amy Warren, Membership Coordinator & Librarian  
Caroline Nicolas, Beginner Coach & Play Day Presenter Coordinator  
Michael King & Jenny Wilkson, Communications  
TBD: Programs & Play Day Location Coordinator

The Soundpost welcomes reader contributions of any kind: articles, commentary, personal stories, event reportage. Email is preferred, but postal mail or napkin scribbles are all gladly received, as well.

[soundpost@pnviols.org](mailto:soundpost@pnviols.org)